

Your first attempt at thriller genre, Dear Child, has been a huge success. How does it feel when your thriller debut becomes an international bestseller? Did you anticipate such a success?

No, I absolutely did not expect this success. Especially because prior to "Dear Child" I had been writing for over ten years and also published two books that failed completely. So I was nothing but a broke and unsuccessful author that sometimes hardly knew how to pay the rent or fill the fridge. Those bad times shaped me and make me even more grateful today for how much my life has changed through "Dear Child".

Did you feel any pressure while writing your second thriller book?

I put a lot of pressure on myself at first, because I didn't want to disappoint anyone after the first book. But then I realized that it wasn't good for me and that it made me tense while writing. In the meantime I've developed a different attitude towards it. I have accepted that I simply no longer have control over what will become of my text after it is released. I can just keep doing my thing and not let myself get bent. In short: I am back at peace with myself and what I do.

What made you switch to thriller genre? Do you like to read/watch thriller yourself?

Before I switched to the thriller genre, I wrote novels about women looking for their way in life. Those were stories that were mostly humorous. But I noticed that I lacked the depth. Besides that, I'm very interested in psychology and human behavior for which the thriller genre is an excellent playground. And I don't have to be compulsively funny anymore, that's good, too. Whereby: as badly as my first novels were sold, nobody found them funny anyway. So it was probably a good decision to stop trying. And yes, I really enjoy reading thrillers myself - but not the bloody ones. I find blood and intestines disgusting – but at the same time that shocks me less than all the psychological atrocities that people play with each other.

Dear Child could (and should) become a movie, it has all the potential. If that would happen, who would you pick to play Lena and who Hannah in a Hollywood production movie?

I am often asked this question, especially because the film rights are actually optioned (if not by Hollywood). But I don't worry about the cast. The very idea that one day I might see my book as an adaption on a big screen is enough to overwhelm me.

You have a huge career and a family - when do you find the time to create? And how long did it take you to write Dear Child?

It takes me about a year from the first idea to the final version of a story. In between there are phases in which I write so wildly that I almost forget everything else around me. But also those in which I doubt so much that I would like to give up everything. Otherwise, I work like many other mothers: I get up very early in the morning and then write while my son is at school. In the afternoons I take care of my child, the housekeeping and some office stuff.

Where did you get the inspiration for Dear Child?

Perhaps you remember the criminal case of Natascha Kampusch that happened a few years ago in Austria. That was a case that really impressed me. I was very shocked that it was apparently possible that a kidnapper in our midst could lead a kind of parallel life with his victim. He locked this girl in his basement for years and intimidated her so much that at some point he could even go on trips with her. And nobody noticed anything! This cruel reality shook me very much and ultimately formed the basic idea for "Dear Child".

How does your writing atmosphere look like? Do you have any special writing rituals?

Not at all! You would probably find it very sad if you could watch me write. I'm not even sitting at a table, but on the bare floor with my back against the heater and the laptop on my knees. I just need coffee and nobody should disturb me. I envy authors who I sometimes see showcasing their beautiful desks on Instagram. But I'm somehow different, I need it uncomfortable - don't ask me why.

In your process of writing ...do you structure the plot before you start writing and follow it 100% or do you build a story spontaneously?

I only plan very roughly and then let the characters guide me. Nothing else would work for me. I would have the feeling that a plan that is too concrete is blocking my free view of the potential of a story, which is constantly evolving with each chapter.

Talent or hard work – which is more important in your opinion?

I believe in talent - but also that talent alone is not enough. Further development requires hard work.

3 greatest authors of all times?

Ernest Hemingway, Jean-Paul Sartre, Stephen King.

Is there a book that you wish you would have written it?

„The Alchemist“ by Paulo Coelho. This book is kind of magical. It's not the plot, but there's something between the lines that you can't explain, just feel.

Which book(s) are you currently reading?

„Gone“ by Leona Deakin.

Your favorite word or phrase?

„You're gonna need a bigger boat“, which is a line from Stephen Spielberg's 1976 movie „Jaws“. I use it a lot as it fits many situations in life.